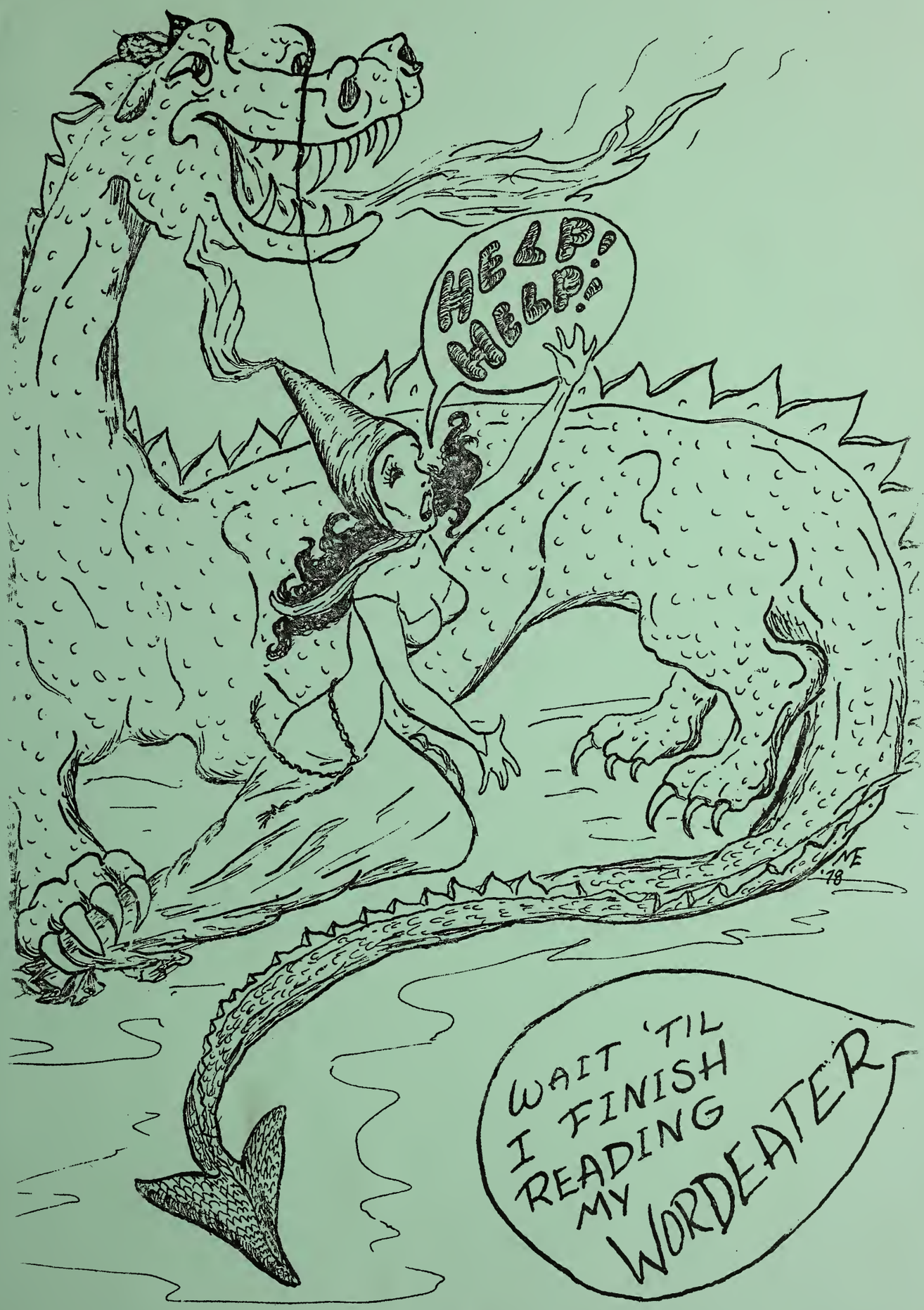
HELP! HELP!
WAIT 'TIL I FINISH READING MY WORDEATER
NE '78

Wordeater Productions
Volume # 25

STAFF

Editor-in-chief Loudmouth McKraken
John Greene
Janice LeFevers
Nancy Lockhart
Mary Martin
John Stobart

Erik Alander
Molly Burns
Rosemary Cifelli
Mitzi Edwards

The staff chooses what poems, plays, stories, etc. are included in each issue, by ballot. A majority vote qualifies the work. For Volume 26, the deadline is December 15. We have two deadlines each semester. Submit manuscripts and cover designs to J. Stobart in C1069. Manuscripts should be typed and will not be returned.

Prose Awards	Rosemary Proctor	$12.50	and
	John Fillipitch	$12.50	
Poetry	Mike Boldman	$25.00	
Covers	Mitzi Edwards	$20.00 (2)	

Each issue, $25.00 awards for poetry and prose are awarded if any of the writing merits an award, in the opinion of J. Stobart. Also, there is $10.00 award for both the front and the back covers.

THE STAFF REALLY APPRECIATES VOLUNTEERS WHO HELP US COLLATE AND STAPLE THESE THOUSANDS OF PAGES FOUR TIMES A YEAR.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MARY MARTIN	Poetry Are Like Bugs	page 1
	Writing Poetry	
	Books Are Not Pages	
	Esse Dolori	
	A Tanka Poem	
	Haiku	
	Song To Myself	page 2
NANCY LOCKHART	When The Moon Is Full	
	Birth	
	Brain-o	
	Carnival	page 3
	Padre	
	The Bandmaster	
	The Snake Charmer	
	Candle's Calligraphy	page 4
	A Child Learned Something	
	Fox or Toad?	
P.T MULDER	The Heavy Humid Morning	page 5
	Sonnet	
ELAINE DOLHN	Somewhere Beyond Return	page 6
MICHAEL VOLLMER	For A Love	
. J. SAMPER	Inoundation	page 7
	Trapped In A Travesty Of Life and Love	
	E. Park South Street	page 8
STEVE SIEDLER	Adept	
	Write	page 9
	Haiku	
ELSIE KNIPP	Cruel Winter	
M. BURNS	Magic Dynasties	
	A Short, Short Story	page 10
	Pictures Stand Errect	
RICHARD PIKE	September	page 11
	Evening In Daniels Park	page 12
JANICE LE FEVERS	THE SUPREME REJECTION	
	Impatience	page 13
	Despair	
	Interloper	
	Just A Thought	page 14
	Entreaty	
	Untitled	
	Disguise	
M. BOLDMAN	5:30 A.M. Central Standard Time	page 15
	Victory	
	Triumph	page 16
	Untitled	page 17
KAY HOSMAN	Wigs	page 20
JOHN FILLIPITCH	Cosmic Dust	page 21
COSMIC BOB	awe rapture ecstasy	
	Forehead Lettering	page 22
	Dreams	
JOHN STULMAN	The Diamond Mine Disaster	page 23
	VIEWS FROM A JOHN	page 24
PHILLIP PALMER	GO PRO	page 25
MARY McHUGH	THE WAIT	
AUDIE DAMASKA	GOOD TIMES	page 26
ALICE POCIUS	A GOOD MAN	page 27
JOHN FILLIPITCH	A PROMISE	page 28
GINGER Y.	THE UNCHOSEN	page 31
MOLLY B.	SEE THE LAUGHTER OF THE WIND, HEAR THE COLOR OF THE SKY	page 33
ERIK ALANDER	THE FISHING TRIP	page 35
ROSEMARY PROCTOR	THE SCOREBOARD	page 37
MOLLY B.	And I Hear	page 41
	Once On A Long Ago Trip	
KAREN RIEL	Old Strip Mines	page 42
	Friday Evening	
	Saturday Morning	
	Logic	

MARY MARTIN

POETRY ARE LIKE BUGS

Poetry are like bugs,
Ya like 'em and ya don't
Some are icky, webby things.
And read 'em? Well, I won't!

Some are kinda pretty;
If ya like that sorta thing.
Kinda like a butterfly
All soft and fluttering.

Some are blue and some are black
And some are nothin' much.
Some are nice to have around
And some I wouldn't touch!

It all depends on whatch like.
I'm tellin' ya it's so.
Butterfly kinds are all O.K.
But the spiders gotta go!

WRITING POETRY

There is a fear in a poem.
You are telling strange ears
That your soul has holes;
Or that your mind works darkly;
Or that your emotions are bizarre.

They may shun you,
And let you perish on dusty shelves
In some forgotten corner;
Or worse---broadcast your outpouring
With revulsion or laughter.

It takes courage to write poetry
For anyone but yourself.

Books are not pages
Of words in order,
But the minds of men.
Laid down for you to choose from
That your thoughts may not be caged.

Esse Dolori

As lightning tears
The taut dark fabric of the sky
Your brimming eyes
Rip through my heart's cold resolve.
I read volumes
In your sweet, hurt face.
Volumes
That I unfeelingly wrote.

A Tanka Poem:

I hold a smooth stone.
You say there is no life there.
Could there not be breath
Taken but once an eon,
Not felt by unbelievers?

Haiku

The stream flowed quickly.
Or was it the dragon fly
Hung so motionless?

SONG TO MYSELF

I I I
I Worship I
It caresses me; blesses me.
It is the beginning of Important.
It is the end of Anti-self.
I Impresses, Imposes,
I find it in First
I can't see it in Second.

Me Me Me
Me Loves Me
It holds me; molds me.
It is the beginning of Merit.
It is the end of Fame.
It has Melody; It has Message.
I find it in Meaning,
I can't see it in anonymity.

My My My
My adores My
It squeezes me; pleases me.
It is the beginning of Myself
It is the end of Anatomy.
It is Myriad; It is Mystical.
I see it in Mysterious,
I can't find it in Mundane.

-Mary Martin

********** ********** ********** ********** ********** *********

NANCY LOCKHART

when the moon is full

the full moon it's been said
has caused many a bed in maternity wards
to be occupied.
people have died from suicide;
become psychotic,
cyanotic.
yet I find the full moon exotic.
its spell calls oceans to swell,
and myself (I can tell)
to write like hell (abundanza!)
quite well.
would I pull the wool
when the moon is full?

BIRTH

Pours forth a ruby broth
From rathskeller-dark
And churning womb,
Whilst saline seeps
To cool a sour skin,
And nipples cry for joy
Their blue-white tears.
Astounding to behold
In cradle arms:
Thy felicity.

BRAIN-O

Crystal clusters of alpha ideas
Poured into the beta blender.
Juiced up to:
Write, right, rite.
Mind to unclog.
Entertaining?
No.
Draining.
Yet, I take the plunge.

NANCY LOCKHART

CARNIVAL

(Carn-evil, Car-naval, Carn-avail, Carny-veil)

The child me was wild
For carnival rides
Run by magical tattooed men.
The air heavy (then)
With popcorn perfume,
While carousel lights hid the moon.
Going home was always too soon.
Now it's too sad how
Carnivals have all gone bad,
Or is it that I've grown up too far?

Calliope music has died,
So they ride to the tunes of WLS
And commercial mess
Ages for tampons,
Loud speaking in time to the cocking
Of crooked cannons that never can bruise
The benched bunnies.
Still
We put down our money;
The price to watch a child squeal
Over worried motors' tired wheels-
Head over heels-
Hoping she won't urp
The cherry slurp and the
Seventy-five cent hot dog.

PADRE

I'm the brat who sat
While you spat unctously;
Your guileful gullet guessing
Words to iconoclasts' songs.

I'm the kid who hid
In the crowd
Believing my pedagogue frog
Was a Prince,
A Good Humor Viking;
Soon to take a liking
To harlequin fondant.

I'm the despondent
For whom you held benediction.
It would have been fiction
If you'd held my hand.

THE BANDMASTER

(for Mr. Schu)

He is man in the moon
As he waves flood and ebb.
He is full, crescent, half-
Shy of his force...
Measuring time.

He is spider
Of dancing arms,
Patiently pulling,
Fastidiously,
Filament to filagree;
A-mazing lace which floats
Like gossimer mist.

He is bird teaching songs
To its young:
Instinct response to
Creation's seeking
Beauty
Eternal...

THE SNAKE CHARMER

CASTILE-COLORED SATIN ALLOY TOY
DRAWN TO ATTENTION.
DILIGENT FANG
TO HANG IN THE BALANCE WHILE
TONGUE CRAWLS
THE SCALES.
A REPTILE SONATA TO CHARM:
SHE, UNHARMED TILL THE SILENT STRIKE
OF ALKALINE HONEY-VELVET VENOM
INJECTS THE CARNAVOR.

NANCY LOCKHART

Candle's calligraphy
Waltzes the walls of a borrowed boudoir.
Hot whispers await
Purgatory's benefactor.

Flame floods tatermalion;
Wrested, spattered, fuse-dried,
Stiffened shadow-
Shades
Of me.
Moth.

A CHILD LEARNED SOMETHING IN SCHOOL TODAY

A child learned something in school today
Her task was to color circles using
Crayolas-an important exercise for
Perception and coordination.
She sat at her desk
Trying to get those little
Fingers, eyes and crayons working
Together.
Even more intent she was on
Trying to please.
(Six year olds have a lovely enthusiasm!)

A student came home from school today
With tears, and a page
Of colored circles
Which had printed on the top:
"Poor Coloring".
A child learned something in school
Today
But it had nothing to do with
Dexterity.

FOX OR TOAD?

What a let down
To be told
(Just as bold as you please)
That I'm not Marilyn Monroe.
Well it just goes to show
That some people have
No imagination.

Picture if you will,
My hair a little longer,
A little lighter,
My teeth a little whiter,
My bra up tighter.
I could pucker my lips,
And learn to swing my hips
When I walk;
Be breathy when I talk;
Give back my glasses
To optometrist asses
Who think I'm near-sighted.

Fredricks of Hollywood clothes
Can't improve my nose,
But marvelous hose
Can cover veins
That come from having
Cheap skin.
And I could get thin
On diets of all sorts;
Take up sports.
Then, I'd be perfect
'Cept for warts
That you'd get
From touching me.
Ribbit!

PAT MULDER

The heavy humid morning
is like the pungent, breath-taking air in
the lion house at Brookfield Zoo
when the keeper is late,
is like the weight of a tyranny, pressing
people like green olives until they become
dry pulp
drained of all the fluids that might
create life.
like a manipulating mother pressing
window puttyish conformity into crevices where
individuality might try to escape.
like the attitude of an elderly old maid aunt
towards sex, hippies, blacks, beards, grass,
Jews, gyros, the pill, children, women's lib,
and why you didn't visit her
last Sunday.
like the morning after the funeral of somebody
you loved,
when, all formalities ended, there is nothing left
but to go on with whatever seemed
so damn important
before death intruded.
is like the aura of a bedroom containing two gerbils,
fourteen, no, twenty-one hamsters, five guinea pigs,
one fifteen year-old boy, and a week's dirty laundry,
all perilously close to eviction.

The heavy humid morning
is like the perfumed, musky, sprayed,
powdered, overheated polyester air
in the room where the ladies meet to discuss
ways to improve the
environment.
is like the laundrymat on Sunday morning when
everybody is trying to prove that cleanliness is
next to Godliness, not to mention
easier.
is like an old man suffocating slowly, turning grey
then blue and cold, dead, no longer troubled by the
horrible
heavy humid morning.

SONNET

The sun sifting through the dying leaves
That waft and whirl in elfish winding winds
Who lift and laugh and sculpture ships of leaves
That float on air to far off fiary lands
Where little elves and fairies board each leaf
To sail their ships so small and brown and light.
Up to the sun they whorl each little leaf,
Then spinning downward end their fearless flight
In beds of moss so soft, so dark, they sleep
And when the sun has settled out of sight,
From under leafy blankets fairies creep
And cast their magic spell upon the night.

Now, you can see them, da ncing slow,
If you are one of us, the few who know.

SOMEWHERE BEYOND RETURN

Foaled by a starless midnight, sired by a noon
the stallion runs the canyon of the years,
his silken mane a veil of cloud banked moon,
his satin flanks black-lustered by dark tears.
Some full-starred hour when night hangs soft and low,
a flying spark will light a new star-fire
and when the voice of thunder speaks, I know
the rhythmic beat of hooves will sound my name.

Then he will come, arching his neck in pride.
This surge of flaming blackness under me,
alone, unbooted, naked I shall ride
perhaps across cyclonic tideless sea
until daybreak. His racing hooves will burn
and carry me somewhere beyond return.

-Elaine Blohm

Michael Vollmer

FOR A LOVE

Our languid love affair tells
A story of missed heartbeats
And missed signals
Of waiting too long or
Never knowing when
Afraid or unable to seize a moment.

Looking in your eyes again;
Again the restless soaring
Of birds still searching
A rock strewn beach,
Unable to hope...taking
Cold comfort in the dying sun.

Your smile is a lie
That twists webs around
An already weak heart.
That same smile lies
To you as well, but
Your heart is stronger.

Our forceless love tells
Of never again joy
Snatched...then set free.
For it would be a prairie flower
Picked and held too dear.
But like the prairie flower unpicked,
It will endure through fire and
Storms and trampling feet.

D.C. SALTER

Inundation

Sea of questions splashing within me.
Bobbing like corks, you and I,
uncertain, insecure.
Tides crashing,
falling like tears
to wash away footholds
in cliffs, carved
by mistakes,
by joys,
by pains.
Crashing, splashing,
Thrashing at cork souls
towed under
Surfacing
Saturated
Ascending

GENESIS

Belly bloated,
in shrill cries
expelling
lust-bred
creation
to face
painful world
of sterile facades
and animal forces.
never reconciled
fighting always
never peaceful

CONQUEST

Coarse, dark Sentry guarding.
hinged jewel box, slowly
opening to reveal mystic cornucopia
once arrid, now flowing with precious moisture.
All potent weapon
powerful, erect, prepared.
Penetration of the front lines
Heightened power
in explosive achievement.
All vanquished, satisfied.
soft smooth silent blanket of victory tempting sleep.

TRAPPED IN A TRAVESTY OF LOVE AND LIFE

The cold, empty bed called her from sleep. The faint smell of sweat and moisture was all that remained of the previous night's lovemaking. Rain tapped a steady beat on the window ledge, and caressed the windows as it cascaded down the panes.

The suit which was draped on the chair found its way to the well-built masculine form preening itself in front of the mirror. Her eyes drifted to the many colored cut-glass bottles and vials on the dresser--at her life sitting on the dresser top. It was as though all emotions had been sealed safely in apothecary jars, to be used when necessary or appropriate, quietly guarded in the meantime. Her eyes floated back to the Dressing Man, but she seemed to look through him, not at him. And her thoughts began pooling up in rain troughs of emotion. She opened her mouth to form a question, but turned it into a yawn instead. No need for the question; she knew the answer. It gave her a sense of security to know that he was so predictable, but this morning it also repulsed her.

She scrutined him longer and harder. Like the grainy blow-up of a once beautiful picture, the figure was no longer apparent. She only saw the shadows that created the image. Slowly puddling feelings rose within her.

The Man At The Mirror had picked up a [illegible] r.A full-page florist's ad reflected in the mirror. She remembered how he brought her flowers on her birth day and Valentine's Day, but never in between. The Man With The Newspaper turned and was speaking to her. She assumed

(Samper contd.)

the look she had cultivated in school to makethe teacher believe she was paying tremendous attention. All the while the words floated above and beside her, never penetrating.

The man was smiling now and she knew soon he would laugh. He laughed a lot, but always at the wrong time. The Laughing Man began to read from the newspaper. He liked to use an accent to pronounce foreign looking words-even though he usually did it wrong.

** ********* ********

E
Park
s
South
t
r
e
e
t

Walking down East Park South Street
Wondering about the time.
It's 13 o'clock,
Reaching out to shake hands
the clock says
"good afterning"
Walking down Park South East Street.

Greeting my reflection
in waterfall windows,
Propositioned by steel girders,
Breathing pulls me down
to concrete pastures beneath
my feet.
Walking down East Street- Park south.

Drinking life out of a Dixie cup--
"Please put litter in its place"
Tasting love at Dairy Queen
Walking down South East Park Street.

Neon signs melting rainbow-style
Billboards shouting:
You're in good hands
with Jock itch!

Walking down the East Side of South Park Street.

Sky crying dirty smogtears
Gutters swallowing valuable waste
Wasteful valuables
Buildings, pulsating,
crushing humachines

Moving
down
Street South Park East
***

STEVE SIMLER

Adept as they interrogate
The victim is distraught.
With predetermined attitudes,
They analyze his thought.

WRITE

Embezzle thoughts from intelligent stones
As hypocrites recite an ancient curse.
The pungent stench of decaying crones
Will circle iron minds, and then disperse.

Recall intoxicated strategies,
While you defend demented commandants?
Produce those grand originalities
Beneath fluorescent rays in humble haunts.

Evade discolored wrinkled business suits
With greatest fervor, lest they terminate
A well-developed fantasy that roots
Your basic style to elaborate.

A mastermind that fills large garbage
cans
Meets wealthy people and shakes
famous hands.

*Steve Siedler

Natural chorus;
Five crows on a power line
Not one reads music

-Siedler

Does beauty balance
The internal betrayal
Of a fire fly's glow

-Siedler

.....

Cruel winter winds
Scatter seed from the feeder
Starving raccoons eat

- Elsie Knipp

Magic dynasties
Float incessantly downward
All power ceases

- T. Burns

J. Burns

(A Short, Short Story)

He left again today. The weekend only made it harder. And while the churchbells rang he squeezed closed his eyes in silent ecstasy. While knees were made heavy with weight of prayers, always endless prayers. My feet touch the ground and I receive the same. Refusing to touch the blessed water and we all receive the same.

His easy chair sagged with the pressure of his bones. And that's all it was, bones. The pipe smoke circled the mantle, the Herald lay unread, unpercieved. My legs grew shakey as the memory of the chapel flashed vividly again.

The face of a man, thin and pale, my father. My father of every year. Of every cut and scrape, and later of endless battles and degrading words. My father.

The tests postponed and delayed until every frazzled nerve is broken, till every grain of hope is gone. And my mind, my mind a scattered line of E.E.G.'s.

Cells, cells that spread throughout a good man's body. Cells that injure every organ and turn your thinking in reverse. The menace of humanity, not drugs, no these drugs can only cure.

So now, the choice is ours. Heart or bladder. What a choice. And I say once again that I will not, cannot, register for the vote. That vote.

And on and on it goes. Regrets and remenberances, ruts and routines. It can never be the same, and yet, it can never change.

#####

Pictures stand erect and tall
Their faces immobilized upon the wall
Frames of gold outlining their faces
Their worn down smiles leave no traces
And it is only time which erases
And causes us to fall.

Display of happiness
Leaves no smile in their eyes
But who might ever guess
It was meant only for disguise?

So we thumb through family portraits
Putting aside all the last regrets
The pictures bringing cause to worry
Wondering why we ever hurried
But no one ever quite forgets
It's only lost in all the fury.

####

Once on a long ago trip
Off in a faraway land,
A man with clear, grey eyes
Reached out and took my hand.

He told me of his sailing
His lover the violent sea,
He talked of different nations
He drank his wine with me.

"Child", he said very softly
"life is for those who are young,
For once I was strong and able
But I fear that my time is now done."

(contd.)

M. BURNS
(contd.)

And as I tried to reassure him
He quieted me and said,
"I've had a life filled with dreams
all in the maps I have read."

"And now it is your time, girl
to take life by the throat and to win
To drink and be wild and funny
to forget about living in sin."

"But be wise with your time and don't waste it
on riches or conventional things
Just go with the wind and take
whatever your freedom may bring."

And I hear about the world's lovers
Clad in nothing but illusion
They strike the face of earth
With recall becoming conclusion
Did you read the right book?
Can you remember the name?
Should you resist the second look
Or go after the fame?
Whether it' money or lust
Or cultured new toys
It all turns to rust
And leave us with noise
So where are we left
At the end of it all?
So blind and so deaf
Just waiting to fall.

-M. Burns

SEPTEMBER

The earth is tired--burned by the sun.
Dried by the late days of summer
The plants have endured their life span
And now drape their luxuriant foliage
Around themselves and their neighbors
In tired disarray.

In untended places tall weeds
Disconsolately display the lethargy
Of a spent life. The spring rains
That gave them life and nourished them
In their youth have dried in the heat
Of a summer, nearly gone. Now their leaves
Hang motionless under the September sun.

A layer of gold hangs over fields of corn,
A first clue to hues that will soon
Turn fields and woods to brilliant color.
Nature, the embalmer, gilding the face of death.

Can it be with gentle gratitude she serves?
For her purpose they spent their lives
And energy. Her flowers and fields will bloom
Again after a winter's rest, because they
The germ of life have renewed.

-Richard Pike-

EVENING IN DANIELS PARK

Here, where an occasional pine
Marks the edge of the prairie,
I face the west to see
A multitude of frozen seas
Cascading miles down from the heavens.
The lower, closer crests
Sending a blue-green image.
Each, then higher and a lighter blue,
Adding to the harmonics of this chord
Of color. Each etching its own spirit
And tone, on its crests.
Each adding mystery and beauty
To a magnificent panorama.
Until at last the chord is resolved
As the most distant white peaks
Blend with the moving clouds
In a cymbal crash of blue and white.

-Richard Pike-

JANICE LE FEVERS

The Supreme Rejection

Girard opened his eyes, looked around and sighed. Some were still sleeping; others, having been up for awhile, were just lying there staring, seemingly at nothing. Well, actually at nothing, because except for the endless souls like him gathered there, there was nothing else to see. He was used to it now, could not even remember when he first came or how long he had been there. "I guess it's not too bad," he said aloud to Peter, the soul taking up the space next to him. Peter just grunted. Indifference was the pervasive overall feeling attendant here...never happiness, never sorrow, just endless, forever and forever, indifference.

They had once seen visions of a place called "Earth" and had been told of something called "life" which occurred on it. He could vaguely remember...sunsets, trees, grass, flowers...all of it had been explained to everyone now here. They had been told of the people who inhabited this place...something about love, hate, laughter, tears, ambitions. These were so called "feelings" experienced by the ones chosen to inhabit "Earth". Each one of the souls, at the time of their learning, had all experienced, even if only for a millionth of a second, a feeling called "hope". But that was it, just a one-time minute twinge, the only time the endless indifference was broken.

Of course, there was a way out. It was called the "miracle". And many did go, but not always to stay, for there was a trial period.

Centuries passed. Girard, now at the head of the line, waited. Then it happened... a warm glowing presence seemed to engulf him and he was transported to a small secure enclosure. The miracle had occurred, because he already instinctively began to feel. Anticipation, hope, yearning to make his appearance known, desiring to begin all the creative endeavors, using the talents which were immediately bequeathed to him at the time of the miracle. Most of all he already felt an overwhelming feeling of joy. Even though physically not able to cry, tears of gratitude were within his inner soul, and would be released in time.

Jane Brady rode home on the bus afterwards. Thank God, it's all over, she thought. What a blessing to be able to be done with it. No more dingy upstairs apartments in this modern age...now there were nice clean clinics at your disposal for this sort of thing.

Of course, Bill had wanted another baby...but she had insisted two to raise was enough. He even had had names picked out...Lisa for a girl, and Girard, after his grandfather, if it was a boy. Men...they just [illegible]

The Supreme Rejection (contd.)

Besides relief, Jane felt good too because there was no guilt. After all, she was only seven weeks pregnant and everyone knew it was only like a tadpole then. She would have felt some remorse if for some reason it couldn't have been done until she felt life or something. But this way...no harm done.

Girard opened his eyes, looked around and sighed. But suddenly the sigh became a piercing scream, as waves and waves of indescribble pain swept over him. He looked to the other souls...but indifference was all he saw. My God, couldn't they hear him? The pain intensified as he realized why they couldn't...they did not know what a rejected soul sounded like! Another knowledge came to him. The souls around him were strangers...but why? Of course, I am now back at the end of the line, he whispered to himself in horror. And this realization brought the intense pain again. Throbbing with it, he also knew that he would have to endure it silently, again and again, until no longer it moved him. By the time Girard would get to the head of the line again, "indifference" would once more prevail...for this was the only state a soul could survive in while waiting for the "miracle".

This way...no harm done.

IMPATIENCE

I can't stand:
waiting in line;
stopping for traffic;
intermissions;
interruptions;
crossing bridges;
trying on clothes;
introductions;
coming attractions;
ptologues and forewords.

O', How I wish I had wings;
Or if not me, everyone else did.

I really dislike:
filling out forms;
reading instructions;
preheating ovens;
preparations;
registrations;
commercials;
time-outs;
orientations and dedications.

Oh, How I wish the jello would set;
Or if not it, nothing else would.

INTERLOPER

Late at night
I sit and write
many thoughts
and ideas
that spring into
my head.
Early at dawn
I sit and read
many thoughts
and ideas
and wonder
about the stranger
whose handwriting is
just like mine.

DESPAIR

Bled dry,
Seared raw.
All is empty,
Exposed claw.
Shot down,
Pierced deep.
Everything is gone,
Endless sleep.
Beastial bite,
Pain ceases.
Nothing is left,
Broken pieces.

JANICE LE FEVERS

JUST A THOUGHT

I wonder what is more discouraging; to be a conscientious teacher, truly emerged in his profession, facing a half-empty classroom; or to be a conscientious student, intellectually aroused by new ideas, facing the indifference of family and peers.

ENTREATY

I don't feel close to you at all.
You're never here
When I need someone
to help me reassure my being.
You're always away somewhere
doing your thing,
And leaving me here struggling
To keep my feet on the ground-
And my mind in one piece.
Why don't you just stay away?
I'd rather be alone because I am
alone...
Than be alone because you're not here.

UNTITLED

The days are going by so fast;
it scares me.
I wonder about the wisdom of
keeping
so busy
That a week of a new month goes
by before I change the calendar.
Everything is seen out of the
corner of my eye;
and all I experience seems unreal
barely skimming the surface
of my senses.
Moving along at full speed...
Pausing just long enough to
wonder
"To what end"?

DISGUISE

Her features are pretty;
hair, a soft golden blonde.
Her clothes are stylish and
she walks with an air of grace.
But her house is a pig sty;
her children ignored;
And her husband grows old.

Her speaking voice is pleasant;
her demeanor warm.
Many enjoy her company,
And she basks in their admiration.
But her house is a pig sty;
her children neglected;
And her husband grows older.

Mike Boldman

M. BOLDMAN

5:30 AM Central Standard Time

A street corner at dawn,
With no one to see the cat
As she seeks a resting place
After a slow night of searching.
A bag made of brown paper
Moves along, as if alive,
Though it contains nothing,
Neither cells, nor souls, nor refuse.
The shadows recede, afraid
Of the light the sun emits;
A mutant dwarf becomes a hydrant,
And the scarecrow man a stop sign.
The Morning Star blazes awhile
Then it, too, fades away,
Leaving sun alone in the sky
To reinterpret the day.

In the darkness of an alley,
A man stirs from his vigil;
His watch is over now that the sun
Has come to take his place.
He stares bleary-eyed, awake,
But not seeing, unknowing.
Are tears in his eyes or dew drops
Or pearls of whiskey, left when he
Was not aware?
He shies away from the light,
Like the shadows that crawled away,
Seeking another dark shelter
To avoid seeing the day,
Or anything at all.

A candle burning somewhere
Is put out, no longer needed.

VICTORY

Each in its own turn fades
Into a pale shade of its former self,
Leaving behind the memories
That likewise disappear solemnly.
Quiet evenings on birch-covered lakes
Spin into the dust-buried streets;
Time makes and breaks its own rules,
And life's seasons slip by unheeded.

A carrier pigeon came to rest
Upon the shoulders of Xerxes;
Releasing the message it brought
To the king who had anxiously waited.
And a day passed, then a decade;
The bird perished from the earth...
The legend went on into history,
But there was no turning back,
No hope of reviving what was.

(contd.)

(M. Boldman contd.)

The sea shall rise as in Noah's day
To swallow the whole of Mankind,
But the facts will be distorted
The truth destroyed by the legend.
The sun may cease to shine
In time, but man will have forgotten
His home by then and journeyed too far
To see the end of his birthplace.

Someone will someday sit to ponder
Where the beginnings were;
He shall view the Earth as it was,
Though its reality will be gone,
He may sense the triumph of man
And taste the fruits of victory;
For no one else will even recall
There was such a thing as defeat.

SONNET: MORNING

I look out upon the dim
Of twilight and cannot see
The willow tree that stood
Just this morning. I nod
Quietly, almost reverently,
And turn toward the warmth
Inside.

Evening becomes darkness;
Night, a silent sea, grips
All. Distinction becomes
Shadows, light turns to shade;
A recurring fear that night
Will last forever comes to me
Again.

Fears in the daylight are just
Fears, but in the darkness
They are more. My heart sees
A midnight that my eyes cannot;
Afternoon terrors return
But are greater, more powerful and
True.

Seeds of doubt sown in light
Grow forth in the darkness;
Blackness can hide truth or lies.
Hope is abandoned for a time,
Leaving only a fragment memory
Of what the dawn might bring,
And I flee inside myself to await
Morning.

TRIUMPH

The wave rose trembling,
Resting at its highest crest
Before returning to the abyss.
Lightning clashed in the sky,
Creating dreadful images
That vanished before designed.
Death rolled by silently
In a wagon made of steel
And vanished into the night.

(contd.)

(TRIUMPH contd.)

Somewhere from the shadows
A man will return to bring us
The peace we have waited upon.
In the hours that pass dimly,
We must be driven by a hope
That surpasses the terror.
Leaving that which we know,
We must press forward in darkness
To find the light of a new world
That may afford us hope.

Yet, who will lead us from the night;
What man-god can withstand the gauntlet
That will be thrown before him?
Will he arise at the time of need,
Or lead us long before the end?
Will he ever exist?

He must appear in each one of us;
His home must be made in our hearts.
One man cannot do what thousands can,
But one purpose can achieve its ends.
Do not seek a messiah, but turn
Inward and look to your soul;
Let the unity of man speak as one
And there will be your God.

The sun rose over Elysian fields,
Tinting the faraway hills with gold
Before lighting the entire world.
The trees swayed in quiet winds
That warmed the earth with their breath
And rustled up the silent grass.
Life rose up in triumph,
Cleansing the earth of its darkness
And driving the shadows into night.

****

UNTITLED

I.

Sitting lonely, amidst shattered
Thoughts and ragged dreams,
The old man lifts his eyes
To the ceiling of his confinement,
Then rests his chin
On his chest.

Parried conquests, lost in
Afterthought, race through his
Clouded mind; always beginning,
Never completing the list of items
Written in younger days.

The chair feels
So comfortable
With its doily-covered
Arms and high back.
Outside, the rain
Reminds him of a clock
Pattering unevenly away.
The minutes and hours.

(contd.)

It is late, he mutters
To no one, for there is no one;
The afternoon is wearing away,
And I must be about my
Business.

Yet, there is no business
Left, only forsaken images
Upon which to ponder
Forever.

Still, he stirs and rises
Slowly from his careworn rest;
Moving deliberately to the
Door, which opens painfully
These days, he leaves
With neither coat nor hat,

And the rain remains, pattering
On the empty house.

II.
Poor old Wright, they whisper,
Clustered about the coffin
Like vultures.
He was a fool, though,
You know, at least, that's
What I've heard. He never
Strayed from the old house,
Never took no air, never
Tried to live. Leastways,
That's what I've heard.

A little crazy, you might say,
Another intones as they
Circle the box like crones
About the caldron.
He sat in his old chair,
Waiting for nothing; at least,
Nothing we knew about;
Just sat with his damn-fool
Cat until it got too tired
And died. Must have been
Something wrong with
Old Wright to go out that night
Into the rain and all.
Caught his death, you know.

They stood and tsked their way
Into mourning, each with
His own special comment
As to what was wrong
With Wright.
But Wright didn't care;
He just lay there quietly,
Not really knowing
Precisely what was wrong
Himself.

III.
On the hill,
Beneath elm and maple,
The markers counted
Steadily their inhabitants.
There was a certain
Serenity there; no movement
Save for the tight little knots
Of people who gathered
Every now and then to see
Another marker begun.

(contd.)

On the hill
The trees had started
Long before the people
Decided that it was a good place
To put them, the ones
Who no longer cared.
The maples and elms
Never rejected the company,
For the living and dead
Were quite the same to them.

On the hill
The wind blew away the tears
And never realized the fears
Of those who dreaded the
Very sight of the markers.
A peace resided there,
A quiet and rest not felt
In the hearts of those
Who gathered every
Now and again.

IV.

Amid the calling and falling
Of daily life about him, the
Young man sat for a moment,
Bemused by a world
He couldn't touch.

Which way shall I follow;
Toward the hopes
That haunt only dreams
Or to the hill?

It's a lonely road,
My son;
There are many
Decisions to be made.
But the chair
Is still warm
If you would care
To sit for a time.

How shall I know
If the day is meant
For me, or if it's my
Folly that takes me
Toward the hill?

It's easy to dream
Of mountains and
Molehills and diverse
Things that bring
A happiness of sorts.
But the chair
Is still warm,
If you would care
To forget for awhile.

The time isn't what I worry
About, for there are years
Before me I cannot count;
The journey just seems
So fruitless sometimes,
Almost as though there
Was no point,
No point at all.

(contd.)

N. BOLDMAN

(UNTITLED contd.)

Don't count on the years
Ahead, for age often
Brings more folly than
wisdom,
More weakness than power;
There may be no point,
Son, no reasons for [illegible]
seasons.
But the chair
Is still warm
If you would care
To rest for a moment.

And at the end,
Is that all there is,
Rest? Who would want
To rest for an eternity?
Is there nothing more
To be said for that
Final trip to the hill?

Your doubts and fears
Are well-founded, for you
Know nothing of the
Other side. Rest there is
But not a sleep to dread
For death is more aware
Than you have ever
guessed.
Now, come,
The chair is still warm
And there is much more
To say.

V.
November is a hard, cruel month;
Life ebbs away as though stricken
With its own frail mortality.
The wind rattles hollow leaves
Against a sky of steel-grey pallor
And moans a mournful litany
To all of April's promises.
Time releases its moments fretfully
As if to atone for the dreariness
That it has brought to pass.

A solitary figure walks
Through the dead month
And pauses beneath the
Elms and maples, and he cries
Aloud for a justice he cannot see;
And the wind carries his voice away.

***

Wig, contacts, lashes,
Teeth, implant, nails, I.U.D.
Immortality.

-KAY HOSMAN

COSMIC DUST

Cosmic dust, spiraling slowly,
Ever downward, this new galaxy
Is a [illegible] mythat stares
At the pilot who dared
To journey so far.

Moonshine made the sunshine.
The stars danced and gleamed,
Renewed with magic, spirits and fight
Lifting off last Saturday night.

Our hero, the astronaut, the star,
Felt lightheaded from traveling so far,
[illegible] with an [illegible] face.
Recklessly rocketing to an unknown place.

Completed an orbit and out of fuel,
(The pilot knew well he had been a long way,)
The moonshine was gone when the sun started
rising,

The star no longer gleamed.
Atomic blasts from saucers falling,
Our hero's cautious moving seemed
To reek of shame and cosmic dust.

-JOHN FILLIPITCH

awe rapture ecstasy

the airless plane of inlaid marble spanned limitless in all directions, becoming a flat featureless thin gray line that met the horizon definite as one unrippling edge. statcircuis admired intribate design. each brick bent symetrically across the slight curve of the asteroid surface. only the chair moved in the still night starlight. every tubular curve of the chair's chrome framed back distorted reflections in a polished surface. the rippling geometric masonry delighted his eyes as it sped by. he tacked the spiral maze on a course for the central point of reference, building momentum and peak intensity he shared with his chair. a red bubble appeared around him as he shifted beyond infinite light leaving a scant blur amid spiral lines which coalesced, aged and decayed. he watched hairline cracks begin to distort the lattice of bricks. the twisting shapes of the returning departing filled the view frame which hung unsupported near his hand on the single shift lever control. lattricial spatial distortion made the image swim languidly in slow motion, abruptly both chair and rider vanished without sound.

"Some secret asteroid." thought Edouina Cloxy, as she examined the newsreel photos with round eyes. Only hours remained before her scheduled transmission exercise alert lesson, and now it might never happen. She resigned herself to wasting time on another Durational Access Buildup Lecture, and activated the random selection of one with a twitch of her modest wrist. The monotonous voice with its southern accent began to emanate tinly from the tiny oval speaker between her breasts.

"...new evidence of Infinity Junction..." was a phrase that drew her attention from DABL back to the newsreel and [illegible] her miss the slurred pronunciation of a hey incantation she rewound on her shoulder spool to memorize thoroughly maddeningly again.

"...prime sensitive slate algebra..." began a commercial automatic blurb, which distracted her again. On the screen was the hugely magnified cartoon talking roller skate, which flashed by envisioning fractions in thought balloons, repeating decimals and folding increments, a deadly insensitivity to comparitive essence

(contd.)

was all the impression she had left to contain.

Magnification at duct was all rapid deadly Eudouina Cloxy's single shed tear of disappointment. "Crazy salty." she sobbed. "...mechanical singing fish inedible..." began the robot news as all power faded from the monitors, and her fiber optic bikini became the only illumination in the mixed media alcove.

"Wish I had another penny." thought Edouina Cloxy.

COSMIC

forehead lettering

love says dove
likeness seldom drawn
lent suggestive dent
look sugar doll
lense sense dense
lapse suture derrierre
lurid self defense

@ landing slain drugons
* livid slow death
# lair soon destroyed
? little sequoia dryads
leaf sap division
* light spattered dapplings
@ lurking shadows dance
maim

operation read basement
misery down button ride
an underground installation
blackness that swallows your pride
an elevator of souls you're on
with all of your friends when they've died
bound for sublevel seven, a solace which at your side
a demon with nebulous eyes at the bottom invites within
mattress tag dress shrunk in sleep and cut off circulation
scab separation last shunt delay crystal clot expression
compresses expletion escape claws

customarily,
cordially,
cosmic

dreams

mass-accelerator-experimental-reactor-driven DREAMS
main-amplified-electronic-radio-density DREAMS
mind-attuned-excellent-rapture-dense DREAMS
melt-analytical-erase-register-delicate DREAMS
moan-alert-ectochrome-rape-dazzled DREAMS
mean-altered-entropy-rune-defined DREAMS
meet-aliens-explore-root-dimensional DREAMS
mask-askew-estimate-rock-destined DREAMS
maim-active-eye-rental-death DREAMS
mire-aloof-epsilon-raisin-dried DREAMS
maul-all-enthrall-ream-drain DREAMS
mesh-assert-elevate-rain-damaged DREAMS
mine-alone-each-rest-detest DREAMS
mere-aleph-egg-ruin-dent DREAMS
made-after-each-random-depth DREAMS
mare-alpha-eat-ray-dope DREAMS
metapermutational-accessed-expurgical-reclosured-defective DREAMS
megasyntactical-asexual-error-redundant-delivery DREAMS
mull-arrest-extrapolated-rational-determined DREAMS
more-astral-egostates-receive-dispensation DREAMS
man-alterational-earth-real-directional DREAMS

-COSMIC BOB

The Diamond Mine Disaster

February 16, 1883

The melting snow and falling rain
began the spring of eighty-three
Prepared the frozen earth for life
and Diamond Mine for tragedy.

The mine inspector made his rounds.
He said, "The mine is safe and dry."
A hundred men went down below;
six dozen men were doomed to die.

Six-bits a ton to dig the coal;
sweat like a man, work like a mole.
The haunting words by nagging wife,
"The Diamond Mine will take your life."

The darkened mine and lust for ore
concealed from eyes the hidden snare.
While miners picked for hours on end,
a wall of water waited there.

The pick and water joined to plot
the death of miners underground.
The mine was filled, but not with coal.
A lake of death had just been found.

Six-bits a ton to dig the coal;
sweat like a man, work like a mole.
The haunting words by nagging wife,
"The Diamond Mine will take your life."

The miners screamed and tried to swim
to find a haven safe and dry.
Above the ground the whistles blew
to warn the wives to start to cry.

The years have passed, the mine is closed.
The wives' and orphans' tears have dried.
The Diamond Mine has proved its strength;
the place of rest for those who died.

Six-bits a ton to dig the coal;
sweat like a man, work like a mole.
The haunting words of nagging wife,
"The Diamond Mine will take your life."

-JOHN STAHLMAN

This article was the first in a weekly column Mr. Stahlman began this Fall in the WINCHESTER FREE PRESS.

Views from a John

John Stahlman

From my spectator's chair in a comfortable office I watched the human drama, First Day of School. Although the script is quite ancient, the actors perform as though it is the world premiere. Complaining tax-payers provide the physical setting. The directing is done by teachers some one else hired and a school board nobody wanted. Children and mothers make up the cast of stars.

Obviously, there has been no rehearsal for the children making their debuts. Mothers are checking buttons, stuffing shirt tails in unfaded jeans, combing wind blown hair, removing milk-white moustaches from cherub faces and giving unsolicited advice. Children, if it is their very first day, have competing prompters shouting instructions from inside their heads. "Don't go to school. The bullies, paddles, girls amd old hags will surely get you." Legs want to obey and so they drag little feet across the "no-man's land" of the playground. "Hurry up. This is the day you have been waiting for. You'll learn to read. Not only that, you will get to play on the playground twice a day--without Mom watching. And no naps!" The eyes respond by getting big enough to absorb all the new sights. Inner contradictions on the first day of school set gastro-intestinal butterflies in motion.

Mothers, too, hear internal voices. "You are getting older. You're going to be so lonesome. When you leave your son today, he will never be your baby again." Sweaty palms, moist eyes and a deafening silence confirm the message. Although mothers have some new freedom and hoped-for quiet when children enter school, the price is dear.

Beginnings are not easy.

My own re-entry into a school setting is another beginning. My steps to explore possible friendships are hesitatingly taken. There is apprehension about inevitable evaluations by a professor and other students. The gaps in age, experience, interests and values among classmates are perceived as chasms by my feelings. And the question, "Is it worth the expenditure of limited energy?" suspends me in a self-made purgatory.

Beginnings are not easy.

A fruitful harvest begins with a deep cutting of the soil. Childbirth includes a mother's exhaustion and the infant's cry. Freedom for ancient Hebrews begins at impassable sea. Forgiveness comes on the heels of "I'm sorry." The birth of the Christ child in a dirty manger and strange city as a refugee from tyranny claims that not even God is exempt from difficult beginnings.

All beginnings are hard. Is new life on the other side of the grave any different? All beginnings are hard!!

CO "PRO" by Phillip Palmer

Today the fashionable thing is to"come out". That is the intention of this paper. Actually I wish to explain why I am one of "them" and why I am "coming out."

It's hard to think why I became one of "them". I just did. As far back as I can remember, I was somehow different. Not just a difference that comes and goes, but this seemed to stay deep inside of me fixed permanently in my soul. I had to keep on my guard. Making sure that no one had a suspicion that I might be one of "them". I was scared because I saw how normal people felt about those who had the same queer feelings as I did.

Some people blame parents for this abnormality. My parents had little to do with it. In fact, I even procrastinated being born. Yes, I've said it. I am a "Pro". It's not easy admitting I'm a procrastinator. Now I have to suffer the stares from all normal people. As I have said before, I always felt that I was different. I always put off everything. I would even put off taking another breath, but since I looked strange with a blue face, I stopped that habit

I was not the only PRO person. There were others like me. Some of my closest friends were Pros. We formed an organization called PLO, The Procrastination Liberalization Organization. The first Tuesday night of each month was our meeting time. Usually we never got together until the third Tuesday night.

Pros are always looked down upon by teachers. What about that woman fighting to keep Pros from teaching. Some doctors link procrastination to sterility. They say that Pros are just putting it off. This is mainly evident in female sexuality, "Not tonight darling, I've got a headache."

I "came out" to show that I feel that discrimination against Pros is wrong. So what if it took me three weeks to write this paper? That should not be the case in point. Pros are people too! We should write to our senator now, or as soon as we get around to it.

In closing, I would like to reiterate that Pros are no different from any other degenerate. Pros don't stand in school yards trying to keep some kid from doing his homework. Nor is it true that procrastination is a disease that can be caught by using the same toothbrush for 25 years. Maybe 30 years. Isn't that being a procrastinee about buying a new toothbrush? Finally, have we ever thought that our parents, or even ourselves, might be AtticPros?"

###

THE WAIT

by Mary McHugh

There wasn't much room here, so pacing was restricted. He didn't mind it much, though; he had grown accustomed. He had come to realize that the size of one's world need only be as big as one decides he wants it to be.

Lying on his cot with his eyes closed he went to a place he had known in his youth. He stood in tall, green grass, and filled his lungs with fresh clean air. The leaves played tag in the wind. The clouds, white tufts of moisture, dotted the sky. His senses were thrilled, in fact, overwhelmed by the raw simplicity and naked innocence of nature-an aspect of life he had always taken too much for granted.

He noticed the long shadow of a very tall tree, and imagined it moving across the earth, keeping pace with the sun moving in the opposite direction. It was as if the shadow was using the tree to keep itself hidden. It made him smile to think how the tree was like a giant gnomon on a sundial keeping the time.

Time...there used to be so much of it, like a continuous loan from a bank. And what did he have to show for it. He had squandered it, spent it freely and unwisely, as though the supply would never end. He never really considered the idea of the bank stopping payments if he became a bad risk.

The wind was soft and the air was warm. None of the noise,

impersonal ugliness, or hurried pace of civilization was present here. There was only peace and beauty, as only the very basic thing life could provide.

He rubbed the coarse bark of a tree lightly with his hand and studied it with the wide-eyed fascination of a child. He was noticing things he had never really taken a close look at before.

He saw an ant hurrying purposefully across the ground, and he had no urge to step on it. It was a living creature, and a part of the scheme of things. It had its reason for living, bothered by no one, just went about its own business. Everything had a right to live. He knew that now.

There was an incredible harmony about nature whose imbalance could be caused only by man through his oft repeated sins of selfishness and waste. He wished he could stay here forever, but the giant shadow of the tree was moving. One of his most priceless gifts was slipping away from him. (Time is like a huge barrel of water. You can drink from it, or watch it evaporate. But sooner or later it will be gone, and he was feeling thirsty now.)

In the distance he saw the girl he once could have married; she seemed to be crying, watching him, but not moving. He remembered how they had once been inseperable. Then their sense of values changed. They drifted apart, and he never knew what became of her. He called her name, but she turned and walked away disappearing over a hill.

How different things might have been, he thought, if he had only listened to her when he had the chance. How much of the good things, the simple things in life had he missed out on, he wondered.

Out of the corner of his eye he caught sight of the shadow from the tree. (The barrel was empty.)

He opened his eyes wearily upon being shaken. They had a blank look in them, which is supposed to be normal on such occasions as this.

"Come on," a voice said. "It's time now."

"Alright," he answered rather mechanically.

He was ushered out and they turned left. They walked in silent procession.

"Steady pop," said a voice on the way. It seemed to come from another world. But he thought he should recognize it. A friend or acquaintance or something.

The voice called again. "We'll know when the lights dim." A pause- "You were a good man." The voice was well behind him now.

****

GOOD TIMES
by Audie Damaska

Of all the exciting classes a student could take, the most exciting has to be that wonderful, funsville class: Accounting.

When registration time comes, thousands of students rush to enter in an Accounting course. They are all sick of dull, boring classes and are ready to have a little fun. Accounting provides the excitement they are looking for. They are tired of reading only one or two pages at a time; they are ready for whole chapters filled with gobs of applied vocabulary and tons of abstract theory. Do you think they want a test at the end of the week? No! They want quizzes everyday and at least two pages of homework to do <u>every</u> night.

Some students break pencils and say bad words after a hard test. But not the students in Accounting. They jump up and down doing cartwheels and kicking their heels together, along with an accasional "Yippee!" or "Yahoo!" Every student who enrolls in this fantastic course loves perfection. If the teacher gives a

student an "F" on a four-hour homework project because he didn't draw a line under the subtotal, he won't be mad. In fact, he will be more likely to to up and shake the teacher's hand and say something like "thanks, Teach. How will I ever learn if you don't point out my mistakes? I'm terribly sorry. I'll try harder next time."

Some people say it is hard to concentrate in Accounting. This is true, the reason being that everyone is having so much fun. They start humming happy songs like "Tie A Yellow Ribbon Round The Old Oak Tree", and "Snowbird", along with much toe-tapping and bouncing in their chairs. In fact, it is almost a party-like atmosphere. There is never a yawn, and anyone caught is severly punished by not being allowed to do any homework for two days! This penality is currently being investigated by the Supreme Court as a cruel and unusual punishment after a student hurled himself in front of a truck in despair. His case was a controversial one. Witnesses say he wasn't actually yawning but was hitting a high note in the chorus of "Snowbird". But he will always be remembered, for he died for the love of the nation's best National Pastime...Accounting.

#####

A GOOD MAN

by Alice Pocius

He watched her as she stepped out of her gossamer tunnel. She walked so lightly he could perceive no movement among the web's fine threads. What a woman! Her skin shiny black almost metallic, and those many jointed legs were a wonder in themselves.

She seemed not to notice him as she climbed the silver strands to the top of her web. This was the time to make his move. He took a deep breath and began what he hoped looked like a leisurely stroll across the rotted log that was the base for her web. He was, in his own estimation, quite handsome. Black, about a quarter of an inch long, and the four stripes on either side of his body were a deep scarlet, looking a little like racing stripes of red velvet. Not a bad catch for a young widow.

She watched as he stepped hesitantly out of the shadow of a crumbling leaf into the full sunshine. The sunlight bounced off his back as he skittered along. He looked like a tiny piece of coal being blown about. He was good looking though, and young. He was trying so hard, the least she could do was be polite.

"Hello there. I don't believe I've seen you around here before. Let me introduce myself. My name is Lyla." Her voice was soft and throaty.

He managed a look of surprise as he glanced up at her. "Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't notice you there. My name is Horace. You are very observant; I am new to these parts. I'm presently residing under the lumber scraps at the far east end."

He was so polite and spoke with a refined Eastern accent. She must not let this one slip away.

"It's such a warm day. Would you care to share some refreshments with me? I have a nice assortment of grasshoppers I snared only yesterday."

This was going better than he dared to dream possible. "That would be most enjoyable. I don't often have the opportunity to pass the time with such a beautiful young woman."

She began moving down the web. He could see the red hourglass on her abdomen moving sensually from side to side as she lowered herself gently to the opening of her tunnel.

"Please come in. It will take me a minute or two to unwind something for us."

He moved quickly, trying not to appear too anxious. He stepped into the spun silver of her tunnel and found himself face to face with her. Upon closer examination, she was older than he had thought, but certainly no disappointment.

(contd.)

A GOOD MAN contd.

"Come this way," she said huskily, turning to walk down the tunnel. Her spinneretts were in full view--he found he could hardly control himself.

They made the usual chit-chat as they ate. She told him she was a widow. A small tear came to each tiny eye as she shared this with him.

"He was a good man," she stifled a small sob. "A very good man."

He reached out and stroked the leg nearest him as he tried to console her.

"I'm so sorry. It must be very lonely for you now." His leg moved up hers then across and down her back, brushing ever so gently against her spinnerets. The results were electrifying. God, what a woman! They both knew what they wanted. Sheer animal passion took over. He mounted her quickly, and she willingly submitted. In a moment it was all over.

She was visibly shaken. "What must you think of me?" she said in a small voice.

"I think nothing but the best." He assured her. "Don't be so hard on yourself; these things happen. It's nature's way."

They sat in silence for a little while. Finally, he said, "I think it's best I leave." He didn't know what else to say, it all seemed so awkward.

"Yes, I think that's best," she agreed.

He started towards the door.

"Wait," she cried. She leapt upon him, at the same time sinking her fangs deeply into his abdominal cavity. It was over for him instantly. She sucked deeply, hungrily. When there was nothing left, she crept back into the deepest recesses of her nest. She studied his dry lifeless form lying there; eight legs once so strong and virile now curled up close to his body. He looked like a crumpled piece of carbon paper carelessly discarded. "Oh my," she mused, ". just don't know what comes over me at times."

MORAL: Be wary of the woman looking for a good man. She may suck the life out of you!

A PROMISE

The dark morning sky gave way to the rising sun. It was cool and a foggy mist hung close to the ground, obscuring the trees, houses and sky. Above the near horizon, dark shadows floated peacefully in the growing Eastern light, watching the dawn of a new day. Out back, a tall silo was silhouetted against this morning canvas.

Inside, Emily caught the alarm, as usual, before it went off. She was up now eating breakfast with her parents. She still had to feed the chickens and horses and cows. She had not yet moved the tractor around so that her parents could get the car through and out to town. She had to move some hay too. She sighed quietly at breakfast thinking of these and countless other chores she had to do. It would easily be eight o'clock

before she would finish. But she said nothing.

By seven-thirty her parents were gone and the gentle solitude of a single farmhouse, lost on an old dirt road, made even these monotonous chores go quickly.

By quarter till nine, chores finished, she walked to the front door, then stopped. A narrow cloud of dust was rising over a distant cornfield, heading her way. A car was approaching. She sat on the front porch and waited, since most cars that ever came that far out of the way usually stopped there.

The cloud of dust finally came to the beginning of her long drive, and then her brother-in-law's car appeared. Emily was confused, nearly shocked to see this. Secretly she hoped that no one had seen

A PROMISE contd.

him come. Ever since her sister Sue and his brother Joe had married an air of contempt and disgrace had moved into her home, into her town and into her life. That Joe and Sue had married three months before the birth of their first child was one thing. That she was white and he was black was something else. As a result Emily's parents would no longer claim their oldest daughter. They openly criticized the marriage. They ridiculed Sue's husband. Still, the greatest damage was not done to Emily's family, but to Joe's. For him to accept this white girl as his bride, in the light of her parents disapproval, was suicide; not only for Joe but for his family as well.

The car came slowly, then stopped in front of Emily. Micheal rolled down his window.

"Be beautiful mornin', now ain't dat so, Miss Strawberry." Emily laughed.

"Yes it be. What are you doing here?"

"Well now dat be a story entirely. Dat be som'n entirely." She laughed again.

"O.K., Mike, come on in. But first you stop talkin' like that."

"By and by I will, Miss Strawberry. By and by I will." She shrugged and stepped inside. Mike let himself in.

"So have you heard from Joe and Sue lately?" she asked. "They don't get out here too often."

"Ain't no fault of theirs, now is it?" he said. She sighed loudly and again shrugged.

"Well Micheal, what can I do for you?"

"Oh yes. I be loosin' na place now as we-"

"Cut it out, will ya'. It was funny the first time." She had a polite smile on her face. She was really trying to be nice. "Can I get you something? A tea? Some soda?"

"No, I'm fine thanks."

Then there was silence. Emily stirred uncomfortably in her chair. Mike was leaning calmly against a doorway. She didn't want to ask again what he wanted; Coming all the way out to her house when it was on the way to nowhere. This was the first time he had ever been there.

"So, uhm. where you heading?" she finally said.

This time he laughed. "Now if I was heading anywhere, anywhere at all, this would never be on the way. "No, I'm not heading anywhere."

"So then, what brings you out here?" She tried to say it as though this was the first time she had asked; as though it just now struck her.

"Well now, dat be an powerful quesnun, Miss Strawberry." he said. Emily rolled her eyes. "Miss Strawberry? Where did you ever get a name like that?"

"Well now, I jus' be drivin' round thinkin' bout how you looks so sweet an' fine, like you jus wants to eat it up an' de name Strawberry jus' comes to min'." Then he smiled, not yet having moved from the doorway.

Emily stirred again in her chair, noticeably. She was confused and, as always, uncomfortable when talking to a black man. "So, did you find a job yet?" she said weakly.

"Now who's gonna hire some black man. 'specially some nigger got a bad name like mine. 'Specially some nigger whose brother got some white girl pregnant. A white girl-"

"Mike! What are you saying these things for? And stop blaming your misfortunes on their marriage and child!"

" 'Specially a white girl whose parents won't claim her no more. Say they'd rather raise a mulatto bastard than see their daughter lose her senses and marry some crazy nigger."

"Is that what you're here for? To moan about your not getting another job? Stop using them as a scapegoat for your own-"

"Color?"

"Inadequacies!"

He flexed both arms in the air and broadened his shoulders. Standing there, he nearly filled the doorway.

"Are these inadequate shulders? Are these arms too feeble? Is this the back of a weak man?"

She said nothing, stirred again.

"You know Mr. Brown?" he said. "He owns the drugstore in town. Did you know that he was looking for some help, someone to sweep up after hours? I asked him about the job."

"Well?"

"He said the job was already taken."

"Well, Mike, you can't blame that on anyone. There was a job and you weren't-"

"He was lying. I asked him Tuesday. Just yesterday he hired Andy Johnson's boy. That kid's sixteen years old. I'm twenty-seven; everyone knows how my family is. I

"Well the pay wouldn't have been very good, anyway," she said.

"And isn't it a damn shame that it's the best I could do?"

"I'm sorry Mike. I really am. But please, why are you here?" The large black man smiled again. He seemed suddenly happy, as though she had just given him some good news.

"Dat's right, Miss Strawberry. Shoot, but I most nearly forgot! Now you know Joe, ma brother. He be your brother-in-law, now ain't dat right? Well, things seem that he be in a terrible way, Miss Strawberry. You know how he got the job down at Murphy's Garage? Seem that Murphy un 'n' decides he don't need all the help he got workin' for him. Says he could do fine with less peoples. Now what do you suppose he up and did about that? He tole ma brother that he won't be needin' his services no more. Now ain't dat funny? He won't be needin' his services no more!" He started to laugh. It was forced and very loud and his arms waved in the air. Emily put her hands over her ears.

"Don't that be so funny, Miss Strawberry? You ain't laughin' at all. I think it's powerful irony. Miss Strawberry. Joey, he be workin' for that ol' man for near eight long years. Eight years now and den Murphy don' need him no more. Don' need his services!" He paused. "I cried for ma brother last night. He worse off 'n me. He got a wife and baby. Too bad it ain't a bastard now."

He shrugged his head and walked toward her. Emily stood up, stepped back.

"Now Michael, I don't know what you're here for, but-"

"Oh be still. No one is gonna hurt you." Her expression didn't change, but hearing him say that was a great relief.

"I didn't expect that anyone would," she said. He took another step closer and she thought she smelled alcohol. She took another step back.

"Michael, I still don't know what you're doing here, but my parents should be home any minute now. They just left for town. Said they wouldn't be long. And-"

"And I shouldn't be here when they get back. It would be the damnedest shame to see their angel here with another nigger. You can write off one child, especially when she ain't so pretty. Especially when the one is nothing in the light of the angel. You know, you are all the old folks have got left. You are the pride of your daddy's name now, aren't you?"

"That's not so! Daddy is a good man! He doesn't need me for anything. Everyone knows him. He can walk as proud as anyone in town!" But she stepped back as she finished. The kitchen wall was getting closer, slowly in her gradual retreat.

"That's true. After all, you folks were the victims, right? It was that black boy that gave Susan her child? My family, we're the ones, we're the criminals."

"You're not. You're-"

"Black. Black and-"

"It's no wonder you don't have a job! All you want to do is sit there and feel sorry for yourself because you're black! But that won't get you anywhere! Mike, we were shocked. They would have been shocked no matter who the father was. That Joe is black alright, that made it worse for them. They weren't ready for that sort of thing, Mike. You know this town. Everyone sits at the legion four nights a week; they got the mayor behind the bar. The local paper is two pages thick, not a word of news in it. The people like to talk. They live on it. Joe and Sue and the baby, that was the greatest thing that has happened to those slanderous lonely farmers in years! And I'm sorry it had to fall on your family so hard, Mike."

"So am I, Miss Strawberry". Mike was leaning against a wall, watching his feet. "So am I..."

She smiled again, but now for a different reason. Emily was scared. Her parents wouldn't really be home until late in the afternoon. What DID he want?

"I guess I could leave now," he finally said, "but that wouldn't get me nowhere. I be just as bad now as when I came in."

"Really Mike," she said, "I wish there was something I could do."

"So do I. I wish there was something, but there's nothing. No one can help. My brother makes one mistake and we all have to pay for it. My family, we don't get a second chance... You're daddy. How's he doin'? I mean in the way of money. His work is holdin up fine, right?"

Emily thought of the silver in the dining room. She thought of the new T.V. There was perhaps sixty dollars in

A PROMISE contd.

the house.

Mike saw the worried look on her face and smiled. "Now don' worry, Miss Strawberry. Ain't no one here gonna take nothin'. Wouldn't do me or anybody no good to get thrown 'n jail for a little bit of stealin'. No." And then he started laughing. "I can't help myself that way. But you know, you know what, Miss Strawberry?" He was walking toward her again and the kitchen wall now at her back would not retreat. "The best thing about goin' down in de ship," he continued, "is takin someone with you." A white set of pearls glistened on his face. He grabbed her arm as she tried to run. In an instant he was upon her, revenging his broken life, mocking her sister's marriage. He let her scream. Outside, the warming sun glistened off the silo in the back.

When it was over, he stood at the door. Emily lay on the kitchen floor shaking. He had been careful not to tear any of her clothes.

"Now ya has to be thinkin' two things, Miss Strawberry. Two powerful things. When I leaves here, ah gonna see some of my friends. Maybe meet in the cafe. I be sure an' tell them how good you was to me here, how sweet you really is. Firs you invites me in, an then you starts to talkin' real nice an' well, you remember." Mike stopped, looked at Emily, sensed that she was not listening. He walked up to her, nudged her with his foot. He leaned over next to her face. "now when I go, you can cry out to the world. RAPE! He thundered. "But it would be a sorrowful shame to see daddy's last angel become tarnished. Shame to see you and your folks lose any hope for peace, or pride, or respect. 'Course, I'll deny it all, but that won't matter. You will win and they will all say that I raped you. But it will look most peculiar. Both girls out foolin' with niggers. One got married and the other, well, she says rape. And then they'll remember you and your daddy and sister and mother alright. Those girls with the black boys. Shame to see it. Emily was such a nice girl. Was her daddy's angel. Or, and listen good, Strawberry, you could just deny it all. Make nothin' of it and let some poor old black boy tell his stories. I wouldn't believe them myself.." He stood, looked down at the motionless pile below him, saw her shoulders rise then fall, rise then fall, inhale, exhale.

But more than anything else, I will promise you this." His lips drew tight and for the first time that day he sounded angry. "if you don't say something, if you don't cry rape, then I'll be back."

The noon sun now burned brightly above, shining off the silo in back. He squinted for an instant, then drove out of sight.

****

THE UNCHOSEN

by Ginger Y.

Brown corduroy tailored pants gently hugged Bridgett Lane's shapely hips as she slipped a coordinating jacket over her yellow blouse with delicate rows of eyelet patterned frequently throughout the fabric, and snugly fitting her bosm. She brushed her long strawberry blonde hair with its wisps curling softly along her slightly blushed cheeks. Quickly she applied a shimmering blue line of eyeshadow and brushed her long lashes with mascara.

Confidently she glanced towards the mirror, approving her appearance, and knowing that wherever she went hardly a head went unturned. But this evening she sought the admiration of only one person, Richard Young, a junior at Indiana State where she was presently a freshman.

Already late, Brigett hurried out of the door to meet Rick at the bowling alley in Grantsburg, where most of their friends hung out when home from college. Rick had gone to Grantsburg earlier in the afternoon for a dental appointment.

Bridgett had dated this tall, fairly handsome basketball player for three years, but also dated Dino for the past few months. She and Dino had been close friends since their freshman year at Marengo High.
His real name was Donald Benito. Dino was a nickname the wrestling team gave him the year he became State Champ. He was somehow attractively masculine despite his small stature; but his

muscular build made up for his height.

Both Rick and Dino had proposed marriage to Bridgett. She had refused Dino's proposal two weeks before, but until now was reluctant to accept Rick's. Dino was much more romantic, complimentary, and attentive than Rick, but also shorter-tempered and seemingly irresponsible.

When Bridgett arrived at the bowling alley, Rick was nowhere in sight.

"Ruth, have you seen Rick?" She asked of the plump brunette at the pinball machine.

"He just left for your place," Ruth replied.

A cold drizzly October rain began to come down as Bridgett started driving towards Marengo. She drove slowly along the wet oily pavement. In the rearview mirror, she saw a car rapidly approaching. Shortly it was tailgating her, so she increased her speed. The driver continued to tailgate, forcing Bridgett to drive even faster.

She began to ease up on the gas when the right front wheel hit the shoulder of the road. Bridgett tried to recover but couldn't gain control. The car veered into the ditch, and stopped suddenly as it hit a tree stump.

Shakily Bridgett climbed out of the car and saw two figures approaching her from the other vehicle.

"Donald Benito!" She screamed as the two came nearer. "What the hell did you think you were doing? You could have killed me! You son-of-a-bitch!"

He grabbed her arm as she lost footing in the wet grass of the embankment. "Take your hands off me and get my car out of here! You're drunk, you bastard!" She yelled into his face.

She recognized Stan Jennings as he got into her car. He was heavy set and sort of a follower, not much of a doer. He was soft-hearted and could be easily persuaded. What he was doing with Dino was anybody's guess.

Dino ran to the car and ordered Stan out. Dino attempted to start the car but quickly announced that it wouldn't start and he would have to take Bridgett to Marengo.

Bridgett agreed, only if Stan drove, as she didn't think he was drunk. She sat alone in the back seat as they drove down the road. Dino drank Old Kentucky and mumbled as they went along, but Bridgett paid little attention as her mind was on Rick and what he would do when she showed up with Dino.

Suddenly they turned onto a gravel road.

"Where the hell are you going?" she asked. "Come on guys, I've got to get home."

"We're going to have a party," Dino slobbered.

"If you think I'm going drinking with you--you've got something to learn. Now either turn back or let me out here!" She snapped at them.

Dino leaned over and whispered something to Stan and he stopped the car.

"Thank God, now let me out of here," she said.

Stan got out and walked away from the car. Bridgett began to climb out of the two door Duster as Dino forced her back into the car.

"You can get out but first I collect for the ride," he said.

"Dino, you're drunk. Let me go."

He forced her back onto the seat as she began pleading with him. "Dino please! We're still friends aren't we? You don't want to do something you'll regret."

He ripped open her blouse and pulled up her bra, exposing her breasts. Fondling her breasts, he began to pull hard at her nipples as she screamed for Stan, her only chance for help. She could taste her salty tears, as he placed his wet mouth over hers and tried to force his tongue between her tightly gritted teeth. Sharply she bit his tongue.

"Ah, shit!" He yelled in pain and anger. "All right lady, you'll get your's. You won't hurt Benito anymore."

He had her legs pinned beneath his as she struggled to free herself. She pushed the palms of her clammy hands against his chest, trying to force his body away from hers. He began tugging at her pants as she pounded her fists on his back and started digging her long nails into the skin at the back of his neck.

His panting breath reeked of whiskey as he forced her legs apart. She felt his belt buckle dig into her leg as he pulled off his pants.

All the while she begged, "Please. Dino, don't. Dino please don't hurt me like this."

Pressing himself heavily upon her thighs, she felt his hot, wet penis penetrating her body, thrusting inside her as she screamed with pain and horror. This couldn't be real, she thought as he plunged deeper inside her.

"Oh God!" She cried, as she felt a throbbing pulsation inside her.

Dino lifted himself off her body. Leaning over her, he wiped the tears from her eyes and left the car.

Bridgett hurriedly locked the doors and dressed herself, not knowing what to do, as Stan had the keys. Soon she heard the latch, as Stan unlocked the door. He assured her that he would not hurt her. She sobbed quietly as he explained that her car would start and

THE UNCHOSEN contd.

how Dino had tricked her into going along with them.

Leaving Dino behind, Stan drove Bridgett to her car.

Arriving home, Bridgett slipped in the back door, quickly showered and changed. She then called Rick.

He came and suggested they go for a drive.

"No," she said, "let's just sit out on the steps. It's stopped raining now." She shuddered as he placed his arm around her.

"What's wrong?" He asked. You're shaking and you've been crying."

"I was---," she hesitated, "in an accident tonight."

"You weren't hurt, were you?"

She fought back the tears as she thought of how ironic the question was and replied, "No."

They sat there a while longer. Bridgett was unusually quiet, while Rick talked about their future together. She didn't hear much of what he was saying as she kept wondering, "Why, Dino, why?"

She heard Rick ask, "Do you have an answer?"

"Answer" She asked startled. Her lips trembled and tears came to her eyes as she replied, "No---no I don't."

#####

SEE THE LAUGHTER OF THE WIND, HEAR THE COLOR OF THE SKY

-Molly B.-

Through soft meadow fields he would run, wind blowing the dande ion that made him sneeze, stopping every few steps to pick an occasional wild flower or smell the blue violets that seemded to fall around his small feet. Every day he would come to this field and imagine the beauty of it all. So quiet and serene it was here, so sharp were the sounds he heard, and the smell of the freshness all around him. And tje beauty he could see, not with his eyes, but with his heart, as only he could, for he was blind.

He saw more than I or most anyone could see, therefore who was really blind? For I could see, yet never really looked as deeply as I could have, but only to the outside. Whereas the boy, saw to the inside, and most importantly, understood what he saw. More aware of the world around him, he loved.

I noticed him here one day, a day when I had set out with my ever-ready bottle of Jack Daniels to set mind at ease.

One day when I needed to get away from it all and came to this quiet field to rest my mind awhile.

As I watched, a young girl, not more than ten, maybe eleven, called the boy.

"Come, Josh, mama's waiting, we'll be back tomorrow, come on now." She said in a very English accent.

And Josh followed her as if he could see her. He amazed me, I wanted to know more about him.

The next day I came to the field once again, and the day after that, and after that many times again. I remember quite clearly, everyday he came he would come with the girl and an older woman. They would leave him to run through the fields. Every day I would watch as the small, blonde head would appear. Josh, no more than seven or eight, would run and run 'til it would seem he could just fall down and stay right there.

It never failed, he was there every day that I came, I began to love to sit and watch him. He was unaware of me as were flowers in the field. He seemed to love to put the flowers to his nose to smell them, or just feel their softness upon his face. Putting things to his face, it would seem that he could almost hear t them talking to him, whispers of laughter, and he would laugh along. The beautiful childishness of his laughter would make me want to laugh along too, and so I would, and he would puzzlingly look up, aware that someone else was near him, sharing the beauty of his world.

So one day as I laughed along with him, I decided to go over and meet the young man. I walked slowly towards him, and as he heard me approaching he asked,

"Who is it?"

I answered, "It is I, the laughter of the wind."

"And I" he said smiling, "am the color of the sky."

"And a pretty color you are sir." I added.

He looked at me; or should I say turned my way, and said, "I heard you laughing as I played with the butterflies, they were brown you know."

"And how did you know they were brown, my little friend?" I inquired.

"Because they told me so." He answered quite matter-of-factly, as if it were true, the butterflies talking to him.

"They did you know, talk to me that is." He said, then adding, "you don't believe me, do you? Well not many people do anyway, it doesn't matter I guess. The people, they say I'm in a world of my own, but what they really think is that I'm crazy, do you think I'm crazy?"

"Now why would I think you were crazy? We all need a world of our own just to be ourselves, in fact, I think you're pretty smart myself."

And that was the start of our friendship. As I found out through different sources, Josh was emotionally disturbed. I think perhaps that was disgnosed for mere labeling, for I found him to be one of the brightest, most inquisitive young men I ever stumbled across. It didn't make any difference to us in the field what they called him outside of it, for everything surrounding us was both rare and beautiful, so like it, we were beautiful.

As we would sit in this meadow, I would tell him parts from the story of THE LITTLE PRINCE, parts I perhaps treasured a bit more than the others. He loved it and would always beg me to tell him over and over again about the prince's special rose, and why, if there were millions like it, it was so special ti him. So one afternoon I brought the book along to read to him. And day after day we would read it, Josh never seeming to tire of it. After we had read that one several times over, to the point where Josh could recite it, I began bringing other books.

I soon ran out of books to bring and we soon tired of the books I had already brought. So one day I brought a few bits of poetry I had written and a notebook and a pen. I read Josh the poems and then he recited offhandedly some of his own, which I'd write down, then we would put them to music on my guitar, or simply leave them poems. Josh loved the music of the guitar and soon had conned me into teaching him the basic chords.

This went on for quite some time, until one day I went to the meadow as usual and Josh wasn't there. I waited all day, it just wasn't like him not to come to the meadow. I came once again the next day, until the fourth day; I was sitting contemplating when a voice startled me.

"Hello there, are you waiting for Josh?"

As I looked up I noticed the face of the young girl who dropped Josh off everyday.

"Why yes. Yes, I'm," I replied.

"Well you shant find him here I'm afraid. He's been asking for you though, and he asked me to come here and tell you that he'll be back soon and not to worry." She explained turning to go.

"Wait a minute, I am worried and I'd like to know where he's been," I said quite anxiously.

As it turned out Josh had been hit by a car and was hospitalized. It all seemed so unreal as I walked into the sterile white room, as compared to the meadow, all plastic and pavement, not at all like a place for beautiful Josh. It was all so different seeing him here surrounded by white walls and crisp sheets, as compared to colorful, scented wild flowers. Josh and I were meadow people, not pavement people.

Josh's stay at the hospital didn't last too long. The car had damaged him badly and had punctured one of his lungs; he died six days after his arrival. The doctors expected it all along, and because they knew there was nothing more that could be done, allowed me to bring him to the meadow once more.

I carried him there, and we read as he lay upon the sun-warmed grass with the breeze blowing through his hair as it used to. And he said to me: "You and me together saw the laughter of the wind, and although there may be millions of people like us in this world, you are special to me, and I am your special rose, because you have taken special care of me and gave me all your love and attention, taught me to see the laughter of the wind. But I have done my part, for I am the color of the sky; but like the gold of spring, I cannot stay because nothing gold can stay. But even while I am not here, think of me often, because as you walk out into this meadow, as you are you must listen very closely, and once again you can hear the color of the sky."

And I will always remember what the small boy said to me. And I will once again go back to my working man's life. But never will I become too busy to take time out to pick a wild flower, or to just sit and let the breeze blow through my hair. Never will I be so deaf as to be unable to hear the butterflies speaking to me. Josh learned to <u>see</u> the laughter of the wind, and I through him have learned that in the middle of a day full of hassles I may stop, and if I try hard enough, somehow I can still hear the color of the sky.

***** *****

THE FISHING TRIP
by Erik Alander

The point of the skiff cut a thin ribbon through the water, sending out tiny wakes into the cold clear lake. Dave could feel the vibrations of the portable Mercury outboard through his hands gripping the gunwale, numbed slightly by the monotonous droning. He disliked the motor. For that matter, he felt uneasy about the whole trip. It seemed to him that he had given in too easily to modern conveniences, that he was getting soft. Behind him was an enormous amount of gear: tent, stove, lantern, fishing gear, clothes. There was too much and he knew it.

On his last trip to Canada he had canoed long distances with the bare necessities, starving the first few days on dried foods and coffee. But he had adjusted and the padding and heavy portages had made him feel great. This time was different, though. The only exercise he foresaw was strenuously lifting a beer can.

Dave shifted his glance to his surroundings, trying to block out his thoughts and the noisy engine. The boat had just passed through a narrow channel from the main lake into a small bay about one hundred yards wide and twice as long. Virgin stands of spruce and pine bordered the water from which great slabs of store rose like concrete beaches, contrasting dully with the dark woods looming above. The trees clung tenaciously to the unforgiving rock; not a few had toppled into the lake, their scraggly upturned roots a mute testimony to a harsh existence. The sky was the color of the water, an incredible deep blue, arresting to one so unaccustomed to such a ceiling. It peeked around the branches of the smallest trees, seeming to him as if God had planted the trees first and then meticulously painted the blue background around the twigs and leaves.

Later the two men found a suitable campsite. It was fairly high off the water on good flat ground. Due to the steep ledges directly in front of the campsite, the boat had to be drawn up and unloaded a ways down the water's edge.The site itself was ideal, like so many in Canada. Trees surrounded and protected the clearing from the elements. There was an area of soft spongy moss just big enough for a tent, and plenty of firewood was available. But Dave was pissed. He and Jeff were not the first to camp there. Scattered about were beer cans and food tins. "Stinking pigs," he thought as he gathered the refuse in the immediate area. Blackened rocks from the former tenant's fire formed a rough circle several yards from a dead pine tree, its branches brown and bare. A large wedge had gouged into the tender trunk, a useless killing bite into the heart of the tree, a wound to the land. Rough initials were scrawled into the bark. He could not understand the mentality of people who could do such a thing! Perhaps they felt out of place here, homesick for artificial landscapes, dirty skies, poisonous lakes; or maybe they felt insecure in the presence of something they could never understand, something bigger than themselves. So they came to hate the land, find it contemptible, something to humble. And they destroyed it maliciously, mindlessly. He didn't know, never would know what motivates that kind of person. All he could do was stick around and pick up the pieces. He sighed and began to set up camp.

On his last trip to this area, he had brought only what he could carry, out of necessity not desire. He had not seen a man nor a sign of men for ten days of continuous traveling, knowing, then what was meant by "wilderness experience". Now it was different, though. The lake on which they were camped was connected, at a good distance fortunately, to several American resorts and private cabins. Motor boats and powered launches often buzzed by the two's camp, spitting fuel into the water, leaving oily rainbows in their wake. They were to see little of that. The two had established their base camp and then planned to portage the boat to some less accessible waters; a half-mile jaunt through the forest with a boat on one's back discourages all but the most dedicated of fisherman.

The portage wasn't easy; lugging boat, poles and tackle boxes over logs and through standing water, boots sucking dangerously in the evil smelling mud, dark clouds of mosquitoes divebombing our unprotected skin. Hard work pays off, we discovered when we burst upon a most beautiful sight; a clear and sparkling lake shining in the morning sun, wild and tranquil. Trees and rock were the gates to this paradise, populated with sailing birds and splashing fish. The air was sharp and cool, a light fragrance from the wood tinting the air. They were standing at the base of a small inlet on, strangely enough, a small sandy beach dotted by clumps of marsh grass. They loaded the boat and set off, leaving the swirling hordes of insects behind them.

All the stories he had ever heard about northwoods fishing came true that week. They usually trolled slowly around the lakes' edges,

stopping now and again when one thought he felt something on his line. They would stop the boat in an anticipation, but it could as well be a snag or simply the weight of a heavy lure moving quickly through water as a fish. One on the line made it all worth-while, though. The lucky fisherman would reel and play the line, delighting in swift vicious jerks and powerful runs of a bass fighting for freedom. As it neared the boat, tiring almost in their grasp, it would rush straight at them speeding under the craft and bending the pole in a tight arc. He would let out some line slowly, carefully playing the motion of the fish.

They fished for bass but many northerns also hit the line. Just off a sheer cliff that plunged far into the water, the two found a fantastic hot spot. They tossed their lures to darting shadows beneath them, watching wicked looking pike attack the flashing spoons. Of all things they had forgotton a net.

Pulling out bass, even big ones, was quite easy. They simply stuck a thumb in its mouth and picked it up, putting the weight of the fish on its lower jaw, paralyzing it. Such a trick with a northern would cost one a thumb, so they had to yank the pike out of the water with pliers, keeping clear of its needle-sharp teeth. All week long they lived in fear of hooking a really big one, they'd never be able to land a snapping, twisting thirty pound killer with only a pair of pliers.

Fishing was good so they had plenty of time to explore the surroundingcountryside. One day they passed a small creek emptying into the lake. In the distance sang the faint sound of rushing water. They tied up their boat and hiked up a natural path parallel to the creek. The trees were tall, straight, dense, shutting off the sunlight and discouraging undergrowth. Everything seemed proper in its place, like a well planned park. The spongy needle carpeting gave way to a stretch of granite so common to this area. Water splashed over boulders and streamed across the flat rocks like a natural water slide, smooth and slippery. Birds twittered happily in the nearby trees, which stood like benign guardians of that enchanted glade, sheltering its magic, protecting its harmony. They stood quietly as if in a church, for truly here was a house of God. Somewhere a mourning dove cooed.

All too soon it was their last day and they were making their final trip back to camp. In a tall dead tree on the water's edge, they spotted the form of an eagle silloueted by the evening sun- proud white head surveying the coming dusk. As the boat drew near, it slowly spread its wings and effortlessly lifted off the branch, a motion both graceful and powerful.

The bird's shadow blinked at them as it wheeled into the sky. They rounded the last bend, now only a straight run back to camp. Approaching 'home', they saw ahead, faintly, a boat spinning and turning wildly like it was out of control. It continued such even as they came up to it. In the boat were three people; a large man at the motor controlling its mad directions, a small frightened boy in the bow who gripped the boat in terror, barely managing to hold on, and an old man in the center who bobbed like a cork in water with the boat's erratic motions. The two were going to pass the others by, figuring they were just screwing around, when Dave jerked the outboard to the side and throttled it wide open. The craft tipped dangerously on its side in an extreme turn and threw Jeff off guard against the upturned tide. His involuntary action saved them from tipping because it balanced the boat momentarily until Dave could straighten it up. He did it, still heading full speed toward the other boat. Jeff turned around angry and confused, but Dave ignored him. He had seen something swimming near the other boat and knew, though he had hoped otherwise, what the others were up to.

He pulled another sharp turn too close to the other boat, which was now stopped, and halted parallel to it. The large man, his back to Dave and Jeff, was standing and dipping a large fish net into the water. He was weaving unsteadily and grumbling to the old man who smiled maliciously. They scarcely noticed the newcomers.

"Hey! Whatcha got there?" asked Jeff amiably. He thought that maybe their dog had fallen overboard.

The old man turned to him grinning, and the man with the net simply grunted what could have been a greeting, then shouted as he spotted his prey swimming out of range. He was stinking drunk. The old man spoke, "We got ahselves an animal" and he broke into fits of wheezing caughing laughter. Then the other shouted triumphantly and lifted the net high, beaming down on his snarling catch. It was a strange animal, indeed not like any Dave had ever seen. Long and short-legged like a fox, it had a dog's head was mottled grey-brown with patches of white on its sides. One flank was bloodied from an ugly wound. It was fighting mad; twisting and snapping with animal fury, it had already shredded a few strands of the strong nylon net. They all were a bit

(contd.)

A FISHING TRIP contd.

fascinated by the enraged beast' struggle, staring at it like people in a zoo. Then things began to happen.

Jeff had asked what they were going to do with it, when as if in answer, the big man swung the net out and banged the furious, raging, helpless thing against the boat side. It went wild, almost tearing the net free. Dave and Jeff sprang up shocked and wrathful. They bellowed and roared, screaming threats and obscenities at the big man. They couldn't believe it, that this guy was actually doing that. They screamed in frustration, helplessly trying to pull their boat to the other, unable to do much more.

The big man turned to them, surprised and then angry. Who were they to tell him what to do. And what were they going to do to stop him. The net jerked and he turned back to his little demon. The net was in shambles. "Goddamn thing." He swung the net.

"I can it, Mister, don't do it," Dave groaned menacingly above his friend's frenzied houts. The big man hesitated and the net swung harmlessly back, throwing him slightly off balance. He felt something, sensed the others' determination, and it made him mad. Bleeding heart punk, so uptight about some stinking animal. He'd do it a favor to kill it. And if they thought they could go pushing people around, let 'em try it. He focused his bloodshot eyes on them, sizing their shoulders, noting a paddle near Jeff. Quickly he started the motor and without a glance throttled it wide open. The acceleration tumbled the little boy, sitting quietly the whole time, onto the old man who struck at him viciously. The boat sped straight over the creature, already near the shore and trailing a dark red stain behind him.

Shadows molded their faces, flames leapt and danced over the logs. Dinner was done, and the two sat staring into the embers, wrapped in their thoughts. Dave's righteous anger that afternoon, had subsided, flaring up occasionally, as he thought about the incident; dying now into a meloncholy sadness. "I wish he had killed it before we even got there", said Dave, brooding.

"No you don't."

He looked at Jeff. He was right, but still it should have never happened.

"I wish it never happened either, but it did. Just froget it," said Jeff as if reading his mind. "The worst thing is that little kid seeing it all. "Asshole" probably learned his love of life from that old man. What's the kid gonna be in twenty years?" he asked.

Dave shrugged, "They only came here to destroy anyway. Got tired of shooting sparrows or their neighbor's cat. Never enjoy things as they are." Silence again. A log cracked loudly, paused and crashed down, sending showers of sparks into the night air.

"Hey" spoke Jeff, full of false gaiety. "The week was great, wasn't it? The weather was good, fishing. Other than today, no complaints. You can't let one irresponsible waste get you down. He's not loosing any sleep tonight, you know."

"Yeah, you're right,", he laughed quietly. "Not everyone's like that. It's just that, well, this...everything here is so fragile, so vulnerable. How much can it take." He stood up and walked down the water's edge. The moon was full and bright, pulling the opposite shore to him. He felt he could reach out and grab it, crushing the highrise condominiums he imagined filling the tree-lined silouette. Somewhere across the shining still water a loon laughed once, twice, and was silent.

THE SCOREBOARD

BY Rosemary Proctor

"What an awful, miserable, BORING evening! It was absolutely the worst party I have ever been to in my entire life! I know it's hard for you to get around with your leg in a cast, but oh George, you should have been there!"

After nine years of marriage, I had grown accustomed to Kathleen's way of speaking in italics and exclamation points. It was not, therefore, her manner which made me reluctantly roll over and throw off the last threads

(contd.)

of sleep. It was her final statement.

"If the party was that bad, why in the world do you think I should have gone?"

I glanced at the lighted numerals of the alarm clock and added in amazement, "And why did you stay until almost 4a.m., for heaven's sake?"

"Don't be silly, George, of course I didn't just get home. The party broke up about one. It wouldn't have lasted that long, but no one wanted to embarrass the Mathewsons by leaving too early. That's one reason I wish you'd been there: that kind of thing never seems to bother you."

I swallowed this insult to my good manners, partly to avoid being drawn off on a tangent, and partly because the slur was not wholly undeserved. Kathleen and I have a marriage that proves the attraction of opposites, and the laws governing social behavior seem to fall in her half. Unfortunately, the art of putting ideas in logical sequence falls in mine, so I arranged my pillows for maximum comfort and prepared for an involved discussion.

Kathleen's voice was muffled as she pulled a nightgown over her head, "Karen came over here after the party to borrow a couple of Excedrin. At least that's what she said. Ron was drinking pretty heavily tonight and was even nastier than usual, so I think she just didn't want to go home. Or maybe she did have a headache, or maybe she just wanted to talk, I don't know. Anyway, when they pulled in the driveway, Karen came through the back gate and knocked on the kitchen door. I was making myself some tea, so she stayed to have a cup. She started to apologize for Ron's behavior at the party and one thing led to another and..."

"Wait a minute, wait a minute." The story so far had been amazingly clear, but from years of experience I sensed that I was about to get in over my head. "Before you tell me what Karen said, suppose you fill me in on what Ron did at the party to cause such a stir."

"Well..." Kathleen's pretty face wore a puzzled look. "God, George, I don't know where to begin. You know how Ron is...Miserable when he's sober and the devil himself when he's drunk."

Oh yes, I knew Ron. We had lived next door to the Masons for nearly four years and our friends all tolerated him for the sake of his wife. Karen was a different story. Beautiful, good-natured and intelligent, she was a good friend to most of the women in the neighborhood, and the men. Well, the men just liked to look at her. Unfortunately, Ron objected to other men looking, just as he objected to almost everything else about her. As the expression goes, heaven alone knew why she married him; I was fairly sure Karen didn't.

"That's just my point. Kath: Ron's always obnoxious. People expect it. They're prepared for it, so I don't see why tonight was any worse than usual."

"Oh, I don't know. It's hard to describe. Usually you feel that being hateful is just Ron's way---that he can't really help himself. Sometimes I even feel sorry for him; he alienates people without even trying. But tonight he WAS trying. He seemed to be deliberately baiting everyone. Especially Karen, although I don't think he missed anyone."

"Hmm, this is beginning to be interesting. What did he have to say about us?"

"It isn't funny, George. Actually he let us off rather easily. A few remarks about 'brilliant attorney'- his words, not mine- who must be awfully bored by marriage to a dimwit; and one somewhat pointed reference to Beauty and the Beast."

"Perceptive of him," I murmured. "I don't suppose it came as a shock to anyone that the looks in the family are chalked up on your side of the scoreboard."

"To tell you the truth, no one seemed to be paying attention. They were all busy licking their own wounds. It was hardest on Mathewsons, of course. As hosts they were trying to smooth down a whole room full of ruffled feathers. And with Jim's name being thrown around as a congressional candidate next year, he can't afford to have any one saying he's been a bad boy on the city council."

I raised an eyebrow.

"You know I'm a complete loss when it comes to politics, but they said something about Sara's brother John, and contracts and malpractice.."

"Malfeasance. But surely Jim didn't get upset about that. Guys like Ron shoot off their mouths everyday, but without some kind of evidence..."

It wasn't only that. He also got a hold of that story about Sara taking drugs in college, and made some not-so-subtle suggestions that it isn't all past history. Nothing he said was shocking, just ugly. He even called Karen a lousy tramp who thought she was too good for him. I told you it was a miserable evening. The weird thing is that no one tried to stop him or throw him out or something. We all just sat there, sort of cowering, and waited for the axe to fall on us."

"Sounds crazy to me; like standing in line to wait your turn." Somehow I couldn't seem to take the whole affair as seriously as Kathleen obviously wanted me to. Maybe I've just been to more lousy parties, or know more lousy people.

Kathleen hurried to defend herself. "No, George. It wasn't like that at all. Everything he said fell normally into the conversation. As

if it were all manipulated to give him full rein. It was the eeriest thing. I felt like a marionette with Ron the puppeteer: except he did it so well, even I couldn't see the strings.

Her voice trembled and she sounded on the verge of tears. My amusement vanished as I realized that to Kathleen this was all dead serious. She has always been more sensitive to atmosphere than her pragmatic spouse, but I have never known her to be hysterical, and I didn't think she was now.

"O.K., Kathy, I'm beginning to get the picture. What else did he say?"

"I can't begin to remember it all. Something about Larry drinking because Jean wears the pants in the family. And that John gets home so late because he has to stop off for some bottled courage before he can face Mary's nagging.

"Undoubtly true, but hardly a great revelation to anyone. I'm sure we've said worse things than that about some of our best friends. Not, of course, to their faces." Kathleen smiled at that, but the worried look was not entirely gone. "Was there something else?"

"No, not at the party. It was all more of the same. The rest came later, when Karen came over. We started talking and she explained a few things about tonight. It seems that Karen was married before, and Ron is very competitive toward her first husband. She says it's almost an obsession with him. He doesn't give a damn about Karen, but he wants to hold their marriage together so he can succeed where Frank didn't. Can you believe that? Well, apparently Karen has found someone else and has been having an affair. She must be a consummate actress, because I never suspected a thing. She told Ron tonight that she's leaving him for this other man, which I suppose, accounts for his evil mood. What do you think?"

"I think I'm very grateful for a broken ankle that allows me to get around just fine when I want to, but offers me aperfect excuse to stay home from the worst party of the year. Now go to sleep. If we must talk about it, tomorrow will do."

***

Morning arrived somewhat earlier than I had expected. The telephone rang at 8:30 and I could hear Kathleen's voice sharpen as she came fully awake.

"He's what? When? They're there now? Did you call a lawyer or do you want me to bring George? Allright, I'll be there as soon as I throw some clothes on."

She looked slightly green under her tan, and her hand shook as she hung up the telephone. "That was Karen, George. Ron's dead."

"Dead!" My own voice didn't sound too steady.

"Someone killed him while Karen was over here, I guess. She slept in the guest room last night, so she didn't find him until the alarm clock went off this morning. When he didn't shut it off, she went in to see why. The police are there now, and she wants me to come over and stay with her."

"Does she want me to come?"

"She says she hasn't reached that point yet, but if she needs an attorney she'll give you a call."

"The best I could do is recommend someone anyway. You know criminal law is not my field."

I didn't see Kathleen again until she came home to make my lunch. I could have made it myself, but since I broke my ankle she insists on thinking of me as an invalid.

Most of the morning was spent answering telephones and doorbells. The neighborhood grapevine was very efficient and as one of the two lawyers on the street (the other one was on vacation) my opinion was in great demand. I heard the story of Jim and Sara's party from every viewpoint, but none varied greatly from KAthleen's version of the night before. The most common change since Ron's murder was that everyone had become a good sport over night: Ron hadn't been so bad and no one had taken his remarks seriously.

Kathleen looked exhausted when she arrived home at noon. Her face looked older than I've seen it, with deep circles under her blue eyes, and a rigidity around her mouth. Her usually perfect blon hair hung in tangled strands. She picked up one of my cigarettes while she talked, and lit it with shaking hands. Kathleen hasn't smoked in five years.

"The police are questioning Karen. They wouldn't let me stay. They seem to think she could have killed him after all; there's only her word that she came here immediately after they got home from the party. They say Ron was stabbed in the back, probably with some kind of kitchen knife--a paring knife or steak knife. It didn't require much strength, so anyone could have done it. They won't know much more until they find the knife."

"Listen, Kath, there's apparently nothing more you can do right now and you are exhausted. You can give me the details later, and I can wake you if anything important happens. So why don't you take a sleeping pill and see if you can get

some rest?"

The ability to sleep any place, any time was something else that fell on my half of our marital scoreboard. Maybe that is because worrying about other people's problems fell on Kathleen's. At any rate, she took my advice and slept soundly for six hours. I had to awaken her then, when the police arrived. They had come to arrest her for the murder of Ron Mason.

*** ***

After that everything happened so quickly, it's hard to keep it in correct sequence. I found a yound trial lawyer to take her case, but he proved to be virtually incompetent.

Karen became the prosecution's chief witness when she described how she had learned of the affair between Kathleen and Ron, and how she had to knock on the door for quite a while when she came after the party.

Other friends had to admit that Ron had been noticeably less unkind to Kathleen than to everyone else, and that she had admitted on several occasions to feeling synpathy for him. Sympathy came easily to Kathleen, ranking high on her side of the scoreboard.

In retrospect, even I had to remember the drawn, grey, rigid look on her face the morning of Ron's death.

The newspapers carried Kathleen's protests of innocence, but they did not make much of an impression against the evidence of her fingerprints on the knife and her nightgown in his dresser drawer. Motive: He never intended to leave Karen, as Karen herself had confirmed later that night. A classic case of the woman scorned. The indictment was never really in doubt.

Kathleen was released on bail while awaiting her trial. She spent her days wandering aimlessly around the house, looking bewildered and withdrawn. The scoreboard had always shown the ability to cope was on my side. Now she wasn't able to cope at all. A week before her trial she washed down the rest of her sleeping pills with the bottle of champagne we'd been saving for our tenth anniversary.

Until then, everything had been so predictable, but Kathleen's death seemed to break the cycle. Karen, with her beauty, intelligence-- and Ron's considerable fortune--never did marry me. And I had no hold on her, for I had been the one to wield the knife. It had never occurred to me, as I crept down the stairs that night, hoping that the voices of the women in the kitchen would cover the thump of my cast, that I was being used. Maybe there's not much brilliance on my side of the scoreboard after all.

I wonder if Kathleen ever knew. Did she realize that it was Karen, not Ron, who manipulated the conversation at the party that night, to create apparent motives. She must have known that Karen lied about the length of time she knocked at our kitchen door. And of course I was the only one with access to our steak knives and he nightgown. Did it occur to her that Ron's relative kindness was because he knew about my affair with Karen. He even tried to warn her with his barbs about our indifferences.

She must have known. That funny look on her face the morning of Ron's death--was she suspicious even then? She never said anything. KAthleen died rather than say a word. I guess all the loyalty in our family fell on her side of the scoreboard.

Funny, isn't it? Now I have the scoreboard all to myself.

And I hear about the world's lovers
Clad in nothing but illusion
They strike the face of earth
With recall becoming conclusion
Did you read the right book?
Can you remember the name?
Should you resist the second look
Or go after the fame?
Whether it's money or lust
Or cultured new toys
It all turns to ruat
And leaves us with noise
So where are we left?
At the ene of it all?
So blind and so deaf
Just waiting to fall.

***

Once on a long ago trip
Off in a faraway land,
A man with clear, grey eyes
Reached out and took my hand.

He told me of his sailing
His lover the violent sea,
He talked of different nations
He drank his wine with me.

"Child" he said very softly
"life is for those who are young,
For once I was strong and able
but I fear that my time is now done."

And as I tried to reassure him
He quieted me and said,
"I've had a life filled with dreams
all in the maps I have read."

"And now it is your time girl
to take life by the throat and to win
To drink and be wild and funny
to forget about living in sin."

"But be wise with your time and don't waste it
on riches or conventional things
Just go with the wind and take
whatever your freedom may bring."

KAREN RIEL

Old Strip Mines

While watching campfires flicker in the night
And seeing their reflections in the lake;
Observing city dwellers as they take
In cricket noises by their lantern light;
And thinking back on eons of man's fight
With nature's forces; how he tried to make
A world of cities, where he could partake
Of every earthly pleasure and delight--

All this runs through my mind; and, as I sigh
At foibles of man's past, and of the scars
He left on earth, I gaze upon the sky.
While Venus sets, horizon touches Mars.
Again, always I ask the question "Why?"
And seek the cryptic answer in the stars.

Friday Evening

One whispering leaf
Joined by its friends, met the wind
And sang me to sleep.

Saturday Morning

The apple I plucked,
Red, jewel-bright, from the tree
Was really still green.

Logic

If x then y, the teacher says to me;
What happens now determines what will come.
But then, I ask, where would man's logic be
Without the unseen force our "if" springs from?